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LETTER DATED 27 AUGUST 1999 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a Memorandum of the Panmunjom Mission of the Korean People's Army of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, issued on 24 August 1999 concerning the "Northern Limit Line" unilaterally drawn by the United States of America in the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the West Sea.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) KIM Chang Guk
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Memorandum of the Panmunjom Mission of the Korean People's Army issued on 24 August 1999

The situation on the Korean Peninsula, where an unstable armistice state of neither peace nor war persists, has been aggravated further after the naval battle in the West Sea of Korea in mid-June 1999. This battle was a grave military invasion against us. It was caused because the United States side drew the "Northern Limit Line" at will in the territorial waters of our side and has instigated the south Korean army to launch an armed provocation against our peaceful fishing boats.

It is entirely attributable to great patience and self-restraint on the part of the Korean People's Army (KPA) side, treasuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula, that the battle in the West Sea was not escalated into an all-out war. After the battle in the West Sea, the KPA side held five rounds of general officer-level talks with the United States side in Panmunjom and spared no efforts to resolve the issue of preventing the recurrence of military conflicts and reducing tension on the Korean peninsula.

The KPA side, with a view to completely removing a source of military conflicts in the West Sea, has put forward reasonable proposals such as, inter alia, redrawing a maritime military demarcation line in the West Sea, the line which has been left unresolved so far because both belligerent parties failed to establish it properly in the past, and made sincere efforts to realize them.

On 21 July, the KPA side proposed to the United States side a new maritime military demarcation line to be drawn in the West Sea based on the Korean Military Armistice Agreement, paragraph 13 (b) of article II and the equidistance principle of international law, and, on 17 August, requested several times working-level contacts with the United States side starting from the latter part of August.

The Maritime Military Demarcation Line in the West Sea presented to the United States side by us is drawn by connecting the extension of point "A" of the provincial boundary line between Hwanghae Province and Kyonggi Province (A-B line) which was provided by the AA, with the equal-distance point (37 18' 30" N, 125 31' 00" E) between Dungsan-Got, the farthest portion of the Kangryong peninsula of our side and Gulyob-Do island under the United States side's control, with the equal-distant point (37 01' 12" N, 124 55' 00" E) between Ong-Do island of our side and Sogyokryolbi-Do and Sohyop-Do islands under the United States side's control, with the point located in southwest therefrom (36 50' 45" N, 124 32' 30" E), and with the boundary line between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China.

This Maritime Military Demarcation Line is the most just one, both in the light of legality and in view of reason.

Our sincere proposal to hold working-level contacts with the United States side, a responsible party, and resolve the issue concerning the Maritime Military Demarcation Line, which has been a root cause of military conflicts, fully reflects the desire and will of the world's peace-loving peoples who are aspiring to durable peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in Asian and Pacific region.

The United States side, however, is playing a trick to avoid the discussion of this issue, alleging that the present "Northern Limit Line", which the other belligerent party has never recognized, should remain in place.

As is well known to the world, the United States has a full responsibility for the current naval incident in the West Sea since it is a signatory party to the Armistice Agreement and has the prerogative military command over the south Korean army. The United States side arbitrarily drew the so-called "Northern Limit Line", ignoring the other party and, since then, has been instigating the south Korean army to maintain it even at the risk of military conflicts.

Despite this, the United States side is attempting to avoid any discussion of the issue by shifting its responsibility to the south Korean army, which is neither a signatory party to the Armistice Agreement nor has its own military command. The position and attitude of the United States side are, in essence, a deliberate act aimed at evading the responsibility for the Armistice Agreement and aggravating tension on the Korean peninsula.

The Korean Military Armistice Agreement signed in July 1953 stipulated that the waters north and west of the provincial boundary between Hwanghae Province and Kyonggi Province and naval forces therein would be under the military control of the Korean People's Army and the waters together with naval forces south of the above-mentioned boundary under the military control of the United States side.

In accordance with this, the military authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, the signatory parties to the Armistice Agreement, established the practice of discussing the issue of the Maritime Military Demarcation Line in the West Sea in 1973 and 1974. But, this time, the United States side is taking an imprudent position and attitude in avoiding the discussion of this pending issue. This is only a revelation of the ulterior intention of the United States to maintain its "Northern Limit Line" for an indefinite period.

The "Northern Limit Line" is the one which was drawn by the United States side unilaterally, without the permission of the other belligerent party, the Korean People's Army, in the waters under the latter's control. It is also an illegal line, ignoring even elementary requirements of the Korean Armistice Agreement and international law. Therefore, the United States argument on the "Northern Limit Line" is like a brazen-faced act of drawing a line at will in the middle of someone's apartment courtyard and claiming for its possession one part.

Even now, the United States side keeps on concentrating armed forces near the "Northern Line Limit" by manipulating the south Korean army behind the

scenes, as a result of which the waters adjacent to the "Northern Limit Line" have now been turned into the most dangerous area of all, with a "time bomb" that will lead to the recurrence of war.

It is crystal clear that should, military conflicts in the West Sea of Korea recur in the future, they will easily turn into an all-out war and spread to other areas beyond the Korean peninsula. This is why the social and political circles of south Korea also admitted that the "Northern Limit Line" is an unjustifiable "line in question", it being unilaterally drawn by the United States side in the name of the "United Nations command".

The Korean People's Army will continue to resolutely reject the "Northern Limit Line", regarding it as an infringement upon our sovereignty. In order to prevent military conflicts in the West Sea of Korea and ease tension, the United States side should withdraw the "Northern Limit Line" and respond as early as possible to our proposal for working-level contacts aimed at confirming a new maritime military demarcation line. This is our consistent position.

If the United States side insists on the "Northern Limit Line" to the last, escaping from the discussion on the issue of the Maritime Military Demarcation Line, it will be revealing its true colours as a destroyer of peace and security before the world.

It is expected that the United Nations and the Security Council, with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, will pay due attention to the efforts of the Korean People's Army to resolve the issue of the Maritime Military Demarcation Line in the West Sea of Korea and extend full cooperation to it.